

*Miss Mountain, 667 Quebec St
Miss Taylor, a high acceptance
of this*

SERMON,

PREACHED IN THE

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EPISCOPAL CHURCH

AT MONTREAL,

ON THE 13TH SEPTEMBER, 1814,

ON THE THANKSGIVING IN CONSEQUENCE OF THE
GENERAL PEACE IN EUROPE.

BY THE REV. DOCT. MOUNTAIN.

PUBLISHED BY THE REQUEST OF MANY OF HIS FRIENDS.

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SERMON.

PSALM xxviii. 7.

THE Lord is my strength and my shield ; my heart trusted in him, and I am helped : therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth ; and with my song will I praise him.

KING DAVID consoles himself, with reflection on the strength he has received from the Lord ; with his whole heart, he trusted in him, and he was helped. He greatly rejoiced, and with songs of thanksgiving, for the mercies, and blessings, which he received from the Lord, he, most thankfully praised him.

And, what conduct, after having acquired such victories, as have been gained over the common enemy of mankind, is more likely to call down the favor, the grace, and the protection of the Almighty Sovereign of the Universe, against the attacks of our neighbouring enemies, than prayer, praise, and thanksgiving ; for his wonderful condescension, and bounty, in pouring down such unmerited favours, as he has graciously bestowed upon us ; by his astonishing mercies, in putting an end to the late bloody, extended, and expensive war, upon the continent of Europe. " Deliver us not, O God, over unto the will of " our enemies, that are near us—for false wit-

"nessess are risen up against us—and such as
"breathe out cruelty."

Nothing surely, can be more manifest, than the duty of thankfulness—and with our song, with pious and grateful effusions of our souls, to pray to, and to praise our Almighty Deliverer, from the hands of our enemies—our Almighty Giver of all good gifts, and of the blessings of peace, on the continent of Europe.

I shall proceed in this discourse, by endeavoring to shew the necessity of prayer and thanksgiving to the Almighty Sovereign, for the unnumbered blessings, he has bestowed upon us; and especially, for the late victories, which he has enabled us, and our Allies to gain over our enemies; and to point out our obligation, thus gratefully to lift up our hearts to heaven, in order to acquire his protection, and support, against the attempts of our neighbouring enemies to conquer us.

Without the regular exercise of the gracious privilege that is from heaven, bestowed upon us, of addressing the merciful King of heaven, as our affectionate Father, both privately and publicly, how can we presume to look up for his protection and support. Without opening our hearts to Him, and holding as it were, consoling converse with Him, which we are commanded to hold, they must be shut up, to every kind of christian benevolence and virtue; incapable of enjoying the variety of God's donations, and of obtaining from him, the inestimable blessings of peace and prosperity. For can we suppose that these blessings will be bestowed, on the ungrateful and the unthankful; on those, who from ingratitude and unthankfulness, (from their corrupt na-

ture,) degenerate into sensual voluptuousness, irreverend, blasphemous and profane sinners. And can you suppose, my brethren, that withholding from Providence, the gracious intercourse with him, that is bestowed upon you, by his mercy, that you will not, absolutely thus degenerate; that you will not sink so low, as to relinquish the privilege of being the children of God, and become the children of the Prince of this world; the children of the prince of darkness; after having shut your eyes, to the brilliancy of the proffered Light of Heaven. Without looking up, to this light, all your charity, and the various other moral virtues, which glitter in the sight of the irreligious and uninformed, are nothing; they are mere sounding brasses and tinkling cymbals.—Your souls will become selfish, sordid, devoted to sensuality and voluptuousness; and in general deriving more pleasure than pain from profane and impious oaths and imprecations. Shocking oaths and imprecations of the blasphemous; calling profanely on the Supreme Being,—as I have observed in a former discourse, to pour down perdition on their souls. But profaneness, I trust, nay I am sure, does not apply in general to any in this congregation. I have been many times shocked and offended, at the utterance of this blasphemy, in the streets. But it is my duty to observe, that the neglect of prayer and praise—the neglect of heartfelt thanksgiving, for our various blessings, may degenerate our minds, to the very worst kinds of profane wickedness, and ruin our capacities for obtaining heaven's gracious promises to the truly penitent. This depth of wickedness may be artfully concealed from the eyes of men; but it may sily and si-

lently lurk in our hearts, and render to them, as much, and perhaps more injury than open profaneness ; though its influence may not spread so far around.

To escape from this depth of wickedness, and to raise our minds to the capacity of offering thanksgivings acceptable to God—let us resolve, whenever opportunities offer, to cultivate his prescribed worship ; to enter reverently the place set apart for it ; always before the beginning of the service, and humbly on our knees in his presence, (for he is present, especially when two or three are gathered together in his name) to confess to him, that we have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts ; and never to omit kneeling before him, according to the prescribed rules of our Episcopal Church ; for, at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow. The rules prescribed by our Church, by all who have accurately examined them, are allowed to be the most pure ; and those who conform to the Church, ought surely, absolutely to conform, and strenuously endeavor to support it ; not by entering into vain disputes on the subject, but by a uniformly exemplary conduct ; both at the time of the service, and at the time, when not employed in their worldly affairs ; for man was not formed for continual contemplation ; and necessary business without any breach of piety and devotion, may surely, regularly be attended to.

But the most necessary part of devotion, I am very sorry to say—is, I believe, not properly reflected on, and too little considered ; though it ought to be considered, and participated with heartfelt joy, praise and thanksgiving ; the glo-

rious privilege of spiritually partaking of the body and blood of Christ, which he has commanded to be received in remembrance of him. Do this, he says, in remembrance of me. And shall we neglect thus to remember our affectionate Redeemer? shall we not rather rejoice in every opportunity of manifesting our love, our gratitude and our reverence for him?

Many alledge that they are afraid to receive the sacrament; I am surprised that they are not afraid of omitting to receive it. Why should they not, except there is some sin which they will not determine to relinquish, approach with confidence and hope the throne of grace? For if they wait till they feel in their minds, a consciousness that denotes perfection, they never will with comfort or pleasure receive it. They cannot, I am confident, eat and drink damnation to themselves, even by receiving it unworthily; but they may kindle God's wrath against them, and without repentance, provoke him to plague them with divers diseases; and they may sustain the loss of a happy immortality: They cannot receive it unworthily; and as has been mistakenly supposed, sin against the Holy Ghost: For that sin, it is not difficult to demonstrate, it is impossible now to commit.

Our Saviour thoroughly knew the hearts of men; the hearts of those wretchedly abandoned Pharisees; who exclaimed, "This fellow doth not cast out Devils, but by Beelzebub, the Prince of Devils." Our Saviour saith, "All manner of sin and blasphemy, shall be forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost," i. e. against the Spirit of God, which worketh in me, "shall not be forgiven

unto men. And whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost," *i. e.* against the Spirit of God in me, "it shall not be forgiven him; neither in this world, nor in the world to come." Our blessed Saviour, as I said before, perfectly knew the hearts of men; he knew that those Pharisees had been eye witnesses to the astonishing miracles he had performed; which were almost all wrought, not so much to surprise, as compassionately to relieve the distresses of the afflicted; and to produce in the souls of the spectators, stedfast faith, and filial love of the God and the Saviour of the world. He knew that their hearts were hardened; that they were dead in trespasses and sins; and so devoted to the infernal Prince of this world as to attribute to him the miracles wrought by the Saviour of this world. Can any one conceive that those men had sunk their hearts to such a degree of blasphemy, as so judge that the beneficent miracles of our blessed Lord were not his work; that those men who had perhaps witnessed great part of his loving kindness, his merciful forgiveness, and his tender compassion for all who truly turned to him, could attribute such works as his, not to him, but to Beelzebub, the Prince of the Devils. Our Lord knew that they were abandoned to the continuation of approving the works of Beelzebub; and were such devoted slaves to his power, as to determine against turning their souls to the living God. You, he might say, who have been eye witnesses to the miracles which I have wrought, and will not believe, will never repent of your manifold sins, and of course will not be forgiven, either in this world, or in the world to come. But we, my brethren, who have not been eye witnesses to one of our Sa-

viour's miracles, cannot be guilty of the heinous sin against the Holy Ghost ; and cannot for that sin be excluded from the Kingdom of Heaven.

By our determination to fulfil this most essential duty of receiving the holy sacrament, and all the illustrious ordinances of the Supreme Being, we may look up with true thanksgiving, or with grateful hearts for his astonishing mercies to us, in chastening and treading down our enemies, and the enemies of our Allies, on the continent of Europe, and restoring to us such a peace ; which by our determined devotion to him, and obedience to all his commandments, as may long—long continue. Surely, our being blessed, with the subject of thanksgiving, ought to call forth, “all that is within us ;” all our love and adoration, and gratitude to the God of the Universe, and fix in us the continuance of them, to the end of our lives ; and conduct us peacefully to our latter end.

The pouring down the vengeance of the Almighty, the pouring down the vials of his wrath, are, I suppose, not very far from their accomplishment. The distresser and tormentor of the world, labors I think, under humiliation ; I should hope adequate to his enormous crimes. The horrid crimes of reducing to the most abject slavery, all over whom he had daringly and impiously gained an ascendancy, and of oppressing and deluging the world in blood. Who without horror, can contemplate the atrocious crimes, and omit to reflect on the justice of the Supreme Being. Can a Being perfect as he is, in justice, suffer the crying calamities which the inhabitants of Europe have undergone, except they had justly merited the punishments, under which they have

so deeply groaned. Can the God of justice conduct himself unjustly? But why, you may say, have the innocent so much suffered. Why has the innocent widow clasped her infant child, in an indescribable agony of grief to her bosom, and vainly implored the protection of the Father of mercies? Vainly, far otherwise; for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth; and will doubtless reward the sufferings of the truly innocent, with an eternal weight of glory in the world to come.

But why was this pouring out of the vials of God's wrath? For the absolutely necessary scourging the wicked; and the calamities falling on their relatives, was very probably intended as an augmentation to the sting of their infliction. May all the wicked sufferers, have been brought to such a sense of their crimes, as will conduct them to their eternal salvation! We cannot otherwise conclude, but that the horrid murders, and sufferings from war, and various other sources of affliction were the intention of an all wise and just Providence, for the necessary chastisement of the world.

The more we reflect on the magnitude and extent of these sufferings, the more, as they are the wise chastisements of God, we shall adore his justice and his goodness, in working to effect the penitence of all who are not dead in trespasses and sins.

What is the occasion my brethren, of your assembling in this church. You are not met surely to offer the sacrifice of fools, for they consider not, that they do evil. Are you met to make your critical remarks on the preaching? you ought not so to meet; you are met to prepare

yourselves; to enable yourselves to offer such prayer, praise and thanksgiving, as shall be accepted by your heavenly Father. Do my brethren believe me, the sermon is the most unessential part of divine worship. Our humble confessions on our knees, before our heavenly Benefactor, our devout and heartfelt prayers on our knees, to him for his manifold mercies, protection and support; these are offerings if devoutly sincere, truly acceptable to our God. These are offerings, that will turn us from the broad way, that leadeth us to profane swearing, licentiousness and destruction, and conduct us in the narrow path—the path that is beset with dangers and difficulties, which leadeth to eternal life.—The path that is beset with dangers and difficulties, will so strengthen and fortify us that we shall with the help of our God, be enabled, I hope, to repel the attacks of our neighbouring enemies; to chastise them for their presumptuous iniquities, to effect their penitence, and lead them to obedience, to the Supreme Governor of the Universe, by their sincere repentance. From those who choose the narrow path, will the wrath of the Almighty be averted; and must abundantly fall on them, who impiously, persist in breaking the laws of the Holy Gospel; but fill the hearts of all who are faithful with praise and thanksgiving to Almighty God, for the victories through his might, which they have deserved to gain.

You see my brethren, that thanksgiving is a mere mockery of the gracious mercies of the Supreme Being, without our being duly prepared, by penitential prayer and praise, and humble resignation to his divine will; and that we must be subject to the inflictions, which have desolated

the greatest part of Europe, if we are weak and wicked enough, to be void of this due preparation. For can the God of justice desist from impartially administering justice, throughout the whole world? Can the God of truth and mercy, mitigate those punishments which are essential to the penitence and happiness of his creatures. He cannot, for some of his characteristics are faithfulness and justice, perfect goodness, rectitude and truth.

May he, and I trust he will, look down in his justice and mercy on our most gracious, beloved Sovereign; and if he vouchsafes not, to complete his crown of honor and glory here, may he crown him with eternal honor and glory hereafter; and enable his successor to follow his victorious steps; and may his goodness and piety of heart descend to his loyal subjects; and diffuse itself very far around.

But it may be asked, if we, a very small number united for devotion, for praise and thanksgiving to God; and determining with our whole souls, to worship and serve him, and serve our fellow creatures as we ought, during the course of our lives; if this small portion of us may so obtain God's grace, as to enable us, to look up to him, with the joyful expectation of his bounty, flowing upon us in the comforts of peace, plenty and prosperity, in these Provinces. Our thus uniting, and the like union, of many other Churches, may bring forth this gracious effect; and should they not, for all our truly pious intentions, our good God will assuredly bestow an ample reward.

Be convinced my brethren, that not fleeing as from the bitterest enemies to the peace of our

souls, drunkenness, from every kind of luxury, and licentiousness—from the horrid vice of profane swearing and blasphemy ; for by our words we shall be judged, and by our words we shall be condemned ; from profane swearing and blasphemy, one of the blackest of crimes ; as to this, there is positively no temptation to offend the purest spirit of goodness ; whom we are bound constantly to praise ; for our creation, preservation and all the blessings of this life, and for our prospect of a glorious life to come ; this profaneness is surely a mark of our being led by, and devoted to the spirit of wickedness ; to the blasphemous Prince of this world, the Prince of darkness ; daringly rebelling against the blessed, the gracious God of heavenly light. Our fleeing from these vices, and eternally abandoning them, will procure us the grace of heartfelt thankfulness to the only wise God ; and we shall be enabled to feel as in duty bound, the surprising blessings he has of late bestowed upon us, and on our Allies ; and ardently to hope, that such kind of good, such victories will be our portion in this part of his Majesty's dominions. Thus helped by the strength and shield of the Lord, our hearts will greatly rejoice ; our song, to use the language of the text, shall praise him.

By abandoning the horrid vices, before mentioned, are doubtless, by fervent intercessions of the Almighty, shall acquire the blessed power of the humble imitation of our Saviour's heavenly virtues ; we shall be endued with pleasures and enjoyments, unfelt and unknown to the perpetrators of crimes. The pleasures of friendly intercourse with the best of our brethren ; the pleasures of participating their enjoyments, and soothing their

sorrows ; and with them, looking up to the Lord and Saviour, the God of all comfort, for his gracious acceptance of our thoughts, words and deeds ; the heartfelt pleasures of relieving the distresses of the indigent, and the consolation of leading their souls to the love of God ; and the love of thanksgiving for their various blessings, to his holy name. To witness the comfort and relief, which they manifest, is one of our blessed Saviour's enjoyments ; whose meat and drink, and consolation, was doing good.

Do we feel ourselves prepared for the enjoyment of offering thanksgiving to God, by our fixed resolution, in future, to be obedient to all his commandments, let us with our whole souls, exult in the words of our text ; "The Lord is my strength and my shield ; my heart trusted in him, and I was helped ; therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth ; and with my song will I praise him."

Be assured my brethren, that there is no devotion in thanksgiving, which will be acceptable to God, without our determination to become truly penitent ; and that thanksgiving will afford us, but a momentary satisfaction and comfort, and not contribute to our relief from the pains and perils of war ; and to our prospect of prosperity and peace ; but by our fleeing from vice and closely adhering to, and obeying the gracious precepts of the Gospel. Thus, well disciplined, putting on the shield of faith and the breastplate of righteousness, we shall praise and thank our Benefactor, with a joy and comfort, unfelt by the unprepared, the impenitent, and the unhappy. Let us be prepared then, for we know not when the day of the Lord shall come ; to enjoy that peace and comfort, which the cessation of

war can never bestow on the voluptuous, the licentious, the profanely blasphemous and the impenitent. And thus prepared, let us with joyful thanksgiving and praise, look up to that country, whose maker and builder is God; and abandon all the trifling pleasures, and groveling luxuries that have a tendency to chain our souls to earth, and withhold their elevation to the hope of gaining admission into the everlasting happy mansions of the blessed. How can we, as rational, as pious and religious beings, in any degree risk the loss of an inheritance of the blessed? Ought we not to fear running the hazzard of such a loss? Surely we ought to fear even the hazzard of the loss of that temporal comfort, by neglect of devotion and righteousness; which compared with the blessedness of the illustrious felicity to be enjoyed in the presence of the Almighty is nothing, is as the dust of the balance.

Let us then, with the true spirit of thanksgiving, devoutly and piously attribute to the Universal Father, for the victories of our Allies; which have brought forth in Europe, the blessings of peace, all honor, praise, might, majesty and dominion. Let us always remember, that it is God who worketh in us, both to will, and to do. For all our late successes then, and the happy peace, which has taken place in Europe, let us gratefully repeat our thanksgivings to the Universal Father; give him the glory of our victories, and look to him for protection and support; exerting the powers which he has bestowed upon us, with ardent hope of obtaining by our devotions to him, the blessings in these Provinces of glorious victory, and permanent peace. But except the Lord of Hosts from our ardent grati-

tude to him, vouchsafes to go forth with our fleets, and our mighty forces, arrived from Europe, we cannot surely presume to hope to be favored by him, with these blessings. May he bestow on us the blessings of peace, and exalt our souls with filial reverence to him, and grateful thanksgiving.